

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 2, 1846.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. PENNYBACKER made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on Claims, to whom "the petition of Scott, White & Co., praying the repayment of moneys advanced to the army paymaster for the western department of the army," was referred, have had the same under consideration, and are of opinion that the claim should not be allowed. In answer to a letter addressed to the Paymaster General by the chairman, the annexed communication was received from that officer, from which it will appear that, at the time of the transaction, the paymaster, to whom the advance is said to have been made, was largely in arrear to the government, and the committee can see no good reason why, under such circumstances, his act should be considered as binding on the department. Under these impressions, the committee ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the matter.

PAYMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
*January 21, 1846.*

SIR : In your letter of the 16th instant, enclosing the petition of Messrs. Scott, White & Co., praying the repayment of \$1,500 borrowed of them by the late paymaster, Wharton Rector, for the payment of the United States troops at Fort Smith, in the month of December, 1841, you ask to be informed whether the \$1,500 were paid to the troops at Fort Smith between the date of the dishonor of the draft referred to and the death of the paymaster. To which I have the honor to reply, that the date of the dishonor of the draft and the date of the loan of the \$1,500 are not known further than that both were in the month of December, 1841. Paymaster Rector died on the 8th of February, 1842.

It appears from the letters, reports, and accounts of Paymaster Rector, that, on the 1st day of December, 1841, he had a balance of public funds in his hands amounting to \$3,837 89; that, on the 3d of the same month, he received from the Treasurer of the United States \$15,000 in treasury notes, and a draft on the receiver of public moneys at Johnson court-house, Arkansas, for \$9,500, making the sum to be accounted for \$28,337 89. The draft for \$9,500 was returned to the Treasurer dishonored, which reduced the balance in the paymaster's hands to \$18,837 89.

It appears from Paymaster Rector's accounts, as stated by his clerk, and now on file in the Second Auditor's office, that the payments made at Fort Smith, between the 1st of December, 1841, and the 8th of February, 1842, (the date of the paymaster's death,) amount to \$4,182 81. What description of money was used in making the payments is not stated. There were payments made at other posts, between the 1st of December, 1841, and the 8th of February, 1842; but, including these, the amount was \$3,352 26 less than the balance acknowledged by his clerk to have been due the United States on the 31st of January, 1842.

You next inquire whether the draft returned to the Paymaster General, and altered and made payable at New Orleans, was ever received at the proper department from the administrators of Wharton Rector's estate? In answer to this, I have to state that the draft for \$9,500, sent to me as stated, was altered by the Treasurer, made payable at New Orleans, and returned to the paymaster, but did not reach his station until after his death. This draft was again returned to the Treasurer and canceled.

The next inquiry is, whether the said Rector appears to stand as a creditor of the United States on the books of the department, (after balancing his accounts,) for the said sum of \$1,500, or otherwise, and how? To this I answer, that he is not a *creditor*, but a *debtor* to the United States on the books of the Second Auditor, in whose office the accounts of paymasters are settled.

As I had to collect the above information from different offices, an earlier answer could not be given to your letter. The petition is herewith returned.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. TOWSON, P. M. G.

HON. I. S. PENNYBACKER,

*Of the Committee on Claims, U. S. Senate.*